

Remarks

Reconsideration and reversal of the rejections expressed in the Office Action of March 28, 2005 are respectfully contended in view of the following remarks and the application as amended. The present invention relates to a method for repairing a photomask by removing a residual defect in the photomask, the method comprising removing the gallium-implanted defect area by gallium chelation with a water-soluble amine polymer containing carboxyl, hydroxyl and amine groups. It is a non-corrosive and environmentally friendly procedure.

Claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Nara et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,965,301. The method of Nara et al. comprises the steps of: (a) applying actinic radiation to the residual defect area to remove the residual defect except for a defect edge region having a predetermined width from the periphery of the residual defect area over the whole periphery of the residual defect area; and (b) removing the defect edge region, remaining unremoved by the physical means, having a predetermined width from the periphery of the residual defect area over the whole periphery of the residual defect area by chemical etching with a chemical, the predetermined width being such that the influence of the actinic radiation does not extend over the outside of the residual defect area and, at the same time, the etching time can be set so that the region having a predetermined width from the periphery is removed by the chemical etching without any substantial influence on other layers including a light-shielding layer.

Applicant respectfully contends that there is no teaching or suggestion of employing a water-soluble amine polymer for the expressed purpose of the present invention as disclosed and claimed. Nara et al. merely refers to a "chemical" for such purpose, and does not specify the use of water-soluble amine polymers in its method. Furthermore, based on the teachings of Nara et al., there is no reasonable expectation of the success of such amine polymers for the purpose of the present invention. Note also that in order to enhance the prosecution of the application, the claims have been further clarified as found above. Support for such clarifications is found at, e.g., paragraph 7 of the specification as filed. Therefore, this rejection is overcome.

For all of the above reasons, it is respectfully contended that the solicited claims define patentable subject matter. Reconsideration and reversal of the rejections expressed in the Office

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- Reply to Office Action of March 28, 2005

Action of March 28, 2005 are respectfully submitted. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned if any questions arise during the course of reconsideration of this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

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